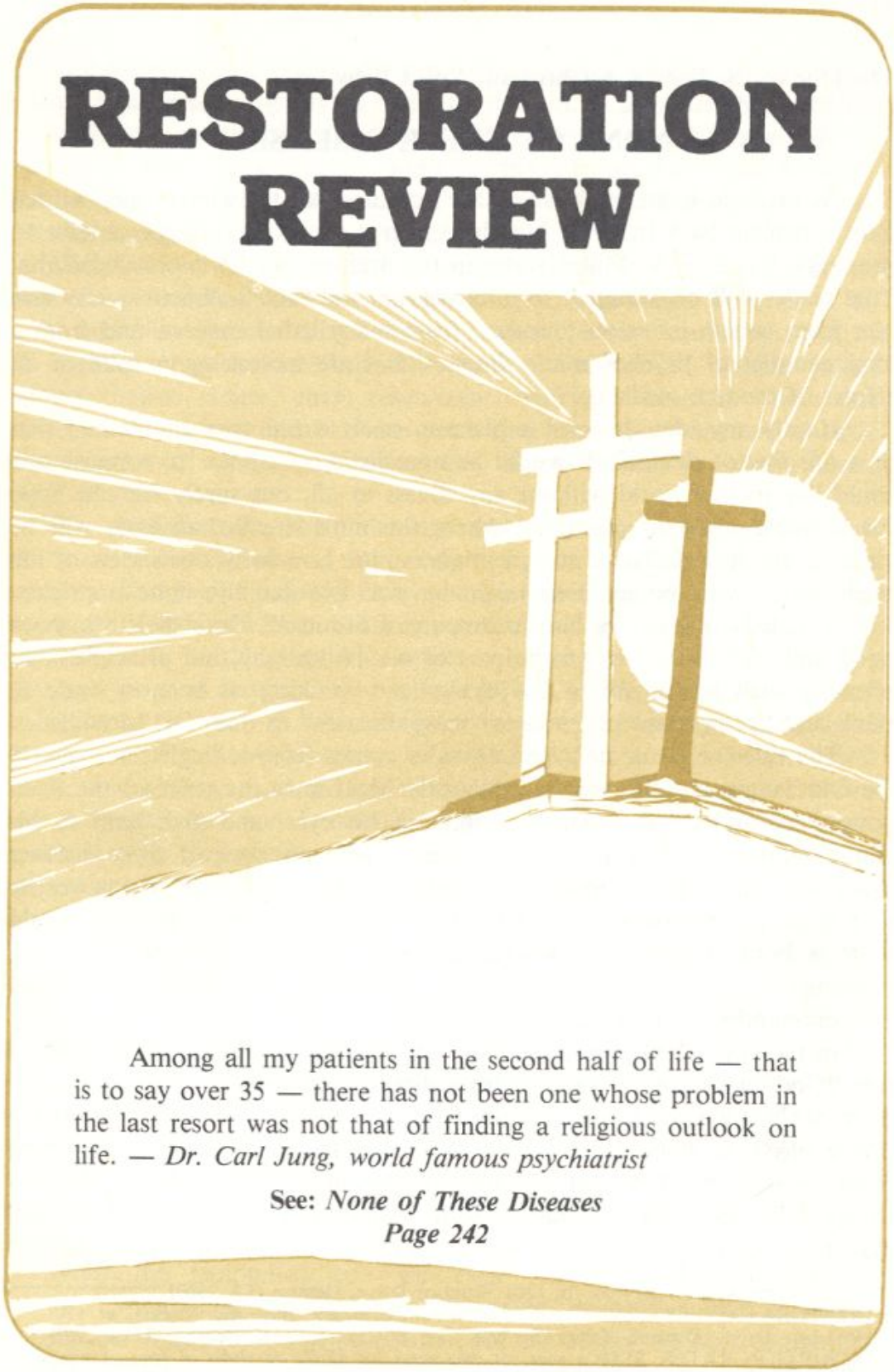
RESTORATION REVIEW



Among all my patients in the second half of life — that is to say over 35 — there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. — *Dr. Carl Jung, world famous psychiatrist*

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The Doe of the Dawn: A Christian World View …

"NONE OF THESE DISEASES"

At my side is an impressive little volume with the above title, written by a physician back in 1963, but since then it has gone through at least 15 printings. Dr. S. I. McMillen states in the preface that he is persuaded that "the reader will be intrigued to discover that the Bible's directives can save him from certain infectious diseases, from many lethal cancers, and from a long gauntlet of psychosomatic diseases that are increasing in spite of all efforts of modern medicine."

Hardly any idea deserves a place in one's world view more than that of a *life free of diseases.* It would be unrealistic, of course, to suppose one could live in this world without any illness at all, but surely we can hope for a world, even in our time, where the most dreaded diseases will be virtually eliminated. To be sure, it matters little how lofty one's view of life might be or what potential he might have to live that life if he is stricken with a malady that causes him to despair of life itself. Good health in both mind and body is not only to be part of our philosophy, but principles that promote such health are to be part of our thinking. It is most basic to think and live in terms of "none of these diseases" as does Dr. McMillen.

The title for *None of These Diseases* comes from a single line back in the Old Testament: "If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you which I put upon the Egyptians" (Ex. 15:26). It is noteworthy that a physician would be so impressed with this promise that he would write a book about it, persuaded as he is that this promise if for all humanity and that our most debilitating diseases can be avoided by obeying the commandments of God.

In fact Dr. McMillen speaks with an uncommon assurance for a scientist: "God guaranteed a freedom from disease that modern medicine cannot duplicate." Referring to the promise God gave to Israel, he adds: "Was the divine pledge a hollow assurance? Were the Israelites miraculously freed from these diseases? Would the same regulations save us today?" He concludes that a large part of the problem of disease is old-fashioned sin, and that if we want to be healthful we are to honor God in the way we live. It does not follow that if one is afflicted with cancer or a heart condition it is because that person is guilty of some terrible sin. It is rather that with the fallenness of man has come disease as well as

death, and that *generally* we live free of disease as we accept God's promise of "none of these diseases" by honoring his commandments, just as we receive the redemption of our souls by accepting other of his promises.

We all know that the mind has great influence over the body and that most of our maladies are either triggered by or aggravated by what C. S. Lewis calls "the spiritual sins," some of which he says come right out of hell itself, but which McMillen calls "sins of the mind," whether pride, jealousy, hatred, anger, envy, resentment, worry, or revenge. These sins actually make us sick and over the years they cause such diseases as toxic goiter, strokes of apoplexy, heart attacks, ulcers, colitis, and even cancer. It is a scientific fact.

Dr. McMillen talks about the high cost of getting even. He notes that man is not always as wise as the grizzly bear, who tolerates the skunk who insists on foraging alongside him, not that the bear is not capable of getting rid of the intruder but that he realizes the high cost of getting even!

Booker T. Washington, who achieved in spite of prejudice against his color and frequent insults, is an example of one who knew the high cost of getting even. He said, "I will not let any man reduce my soul to the level of hatred." This book lays bare what hatred does to our heart, blood vessels, and glands, causing high blood pressure. A heated argument can blow a cerebral fuse and emotional turmoil can lead to surgery. We might be able in life's frog ponds, the doctor advises us, to out-croak our fellows, but it might be truthfully written on thousands of death certificates that the victims died of "grudgitis." He warns us that when we resolve to get even "if it is the last thing I ever do" the chances are it *will* be the last thing we ever do!

The doctor has a special word for those Christians who are too righteous to "get even" in the more combative ways, so they get even by talking about the offender. He insists that this also has a high price tag in terms of illnesses. Verbal expressions of animosity toward others calls forth an excess of hormones from various glands that is very disturbing to the body. To hate someone is to become his slave, Dr. McMillen warns, and the one we hate will hound us wherever we go and will even disturb our sleep.

While the temptation to "get even" is an understandable one, especially when we are so obviously maltreated, we must submit to God's wisdom and realize that when we hurl back the stones we only compound the evil. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, *could* have thrown back the stones (or at least wanted to), but he not only kept his cool but prayed for the forgiveness of those who were killing him, as our Lord did.

We may not have to be reminded of the carnage caused by drunk drivers on our highways, with casualties now numbering 25,000 a year, but we may not realize an even larger dimension to the problem of alcohol that was once described by the *Journal of the American Medical Association* as "Robber of Five Million Brains." The article that first appeared in 1958 said: "Drink has taken five million men and women in the United States, taken them as a master takes slaves, and new acquisitions are going on at the rate of 200,000 a year." Updated statistics would add millions to those figures. Think of it, *millions* of our people taken as slaves, "robbed by a drug" as Dr. McMillen puts it!

One physician is quoted as saying, "No drug known to man is more widely used nor more frequently responsible for deaths, injuries, or crimes than is ethyl alcohol." Alcoholism as a disease not only takes its toll in killing, maiming, and waste of time, money and talent, but it deprives its victims of the superlatives of life, such as recreation, music, art, eating, sex, sight, and conversation.

This little book *None of These Diseases* concludes that the tragedy of alcoholism is so unnecessary and that the answer to the problem is within our reach: "This colossal waste of life and money is preventable by obedience to the Book of books, and 'none of these diseases' is the promise to those who heed the many Scriptural injunctions against drunkenness." Dr. McMillen is impressed with how the Bible warns those who would "linger over the bottle" that in the end the habit will "bite like any snake and sting like an adder" (Pro. 23).

While recently viewing a TV documentary on the current spread of AIDS and herpes, which in some communities is approaching epidemic proportion, I observed that no such analysis of the reason for such diseases as that given by Dr. McMillen was even suggested, *that man suffers these terrible maladies because he has ignored the commandments of God.*

AIDS is a fearful and dreaded disease because science knows neither its cause nor its cure, though it is known to prevail almost exclusively in the homosexual community. While no one says it so plainly, it is evident that AIDS is caused in some way by the

practice of sodomy, which is clearly named in Scripture as an abomination before God. It is noteworthy that when 1 Tim. 1:10 names sodomy among the things that are "lawless and disobedient," it goes on to include "whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God." The term "sound doctrine" means *healthful* teaching, indicating the obedient response to the glorious gospel of God will give one *health*, mental, spiritual and physical.

While I am sympathetic with those who are caught up in this "alternate lifestyle," to use an overworked if not an insipid euphemism, I deplore their efforts to neutralize what the Scriptures say on this matter.

When the Scriptures refer to homosexuality, it is a poor translation, they tell us, and when Paul writes so pointedly that "Their women exchanged the normal practices of sexual intercourse for something which is abnormal and unnatural. Similarly the men, turning from natural intercourse with women, were swept into lustful passions with one another. Men with men performed these shameful horrors, receiving, of course, in their own personalities the consequences of sexual perversity" (Rom. 1:26-27, Phillips), we are told that has no relevance to gay practices today.

There is no mystery as to what constitutes sodomy. A simple desk dictionary will tell you plainly that sodomy is "anal intercourse between two male persons." If we need further clarification, the explicit law in Lev. 18:22 should be adequate: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination." There is no need to equivocate about definitions, whether sodomy or homosexuality. The law of God is disturbingly clear: *it is an abomination for a man to lie with another man as he would with a woman.* How can we be asked to accept as a way of life that which is an abomination to God?

If one has difficulty seeing how "man with man" or "woman with woman" sex is all that inappropriate, the very next law in Leviticus states that "You shall not lie with any beast," and it adds, "it is a perversion." In successive verses, with one law following the other, the Bible gives us examples of *sexual perversion.* If we can see how "man with beast" sex would be disgusting to the God of heaven, we should be able to see how "man with man" sex would be a perversion and an abomination. While the Bible puts them in the same category, no group in our society has yet asked that "man with beast" sex be accepted as an "alternate lifestyle."

Those who choose this lifestyle receive in their own persons "the consequences of sexual perversity," Paul says in Rom. 1:27. There are *consequences* when we choose to do what God has forbidden. Would these consequences not include diseases? Would this have any relevance to the prevalence of such a disease as AIDS in our modern society, a society that often behaves as if there is no God in heaven who reveals his will to us?

The God who created us and loves us does not impose laws upon us arbitrarily, but because he knows what is best for us. He created us so that we might know him and enjoy him forever, as the old Westminster divines put it. He intends that life be joyous and meaningful for us, and so each command he gives us is given in love and for our good. The promise of "none of these diseases" is for real. We will be happier, wealthier, and healthier — now and forever — if we accept his promises and live by the principles he has given us in the holy Scriptures. —*the Editor*

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UNITY AT ANY PRICE?

While it is rare these days for a reader of this journal to cancel his subscription, we did receive such a request from a subscriber in Kentucky. His complaint was that he did not want to receive a paper that advocated unity "at any cost," as he put it. I promptly wrote the gentleman that Ouida would remove his name from our mailing list, but I told him that it concerned me that even *one* reader of this paper would conclude that we advocate an unconditional unity or a unity stripped of any substance. There is indeed a "cost", if that is the word to use, in "preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," to use Paul's language.

I told our Kentucky reader that this journal pleads for a unity based upon both truth and freedom. These are indeed absolutes. Unity without truth would be meaningless; unity without freedom would be a cruel conformity. These have been our constant themes, stated in different ways but lest there be even one reader who has not heard us, I want to say it yet again, perhaps in still a different way.

I have said it many times, in unity conferences as well as in writing, that in the unity for which we plead *no one* is *asked to surrender any truth he holds.* Indeed, I would insist that he should not compromise even the least of the truths he believes. If he believes, for example, that the Spirit has given him the gift of tongues, he should not repudiate this for

the sake of unity and fellowship. It may be appropriate for him to restrict himself in the exercise of such a gift in certain situations for the sake of unity, but he can *never* be asked to violate his conscience.

The basic truth that makes us one is, of course, Jesus Christ and him crucified. One is not only to believe this but be committed to it. Loyalty to Christ is thus basic to unity, and there can be no unity or fellowship where there is disloyalty to our Lord. We will differ in our walk with him, but walk with him we must. When he calls "Follow me," we must respond in loving obedience. All those who heed that call and follow only Jesus as Lord are "walking in the light" and thus have fellowship one with another (1 Jn. 1:7). We will have our differences, whether in reference to baptism, prophecy, methods, but these can be quietly studied in an atmosphere of unity and acceptance. If we insist upon agreement on all doctrine and methods before we accept each other, then unity will only be a matter of talk and not action.

If there is "cost" involved in unity, it would be in putting loyalty to Christ before loyalty to a party. Those who insist that following Christ means to submit to all the unique features of some party make unity and fellowship difficult if not impossible. I may be right in my understanding of baptism, for example, but I cannot demand that a person have my "perfect" practice and understanding before I accept him in the Lord.

We must realize that this is a high cost to those who not only love their party but look to it for approbation, security, and perhaps even a livelihood. To go beyond the party line and accept all those as equals who are in Christ usually brings the anathema of the party upon one. But freedom in Christ is easily worth the cost, for Christ has already paid the only real cost there is to being a Christian.

Unity must also be free, for one cannot be a true disciple of Christ if he is pressured to think like everyone else. Unity allows for the individuality implied in the apostolic principle "Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind" (Rom 14:5). Freedom allows for differences and precludes a judgmental attitude.

Unity in truth and freedom not only means that we find oneness in the basic truths of the Christian faith, but that we allow liberty of opinion to one another. We are free to hold our opinions and even to express them so long as we do not try to impose them upon others. When one is "pushy" about his opinions he makes a joyous fellowship difficult and may even threaten the unity of the Body. This is why heresy is not simply an opinion, but an opinion made into a law and forced upon others even if the opinion happens to be right.

This is why love is the bond that preserves the Spirit's gift of unity to the church. Love does not insist on its own way. Col. 2:14 says it well: "Above all these things put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."

So the unity for which we plead is substantial, not vacuous. It is authentic, not artificial. It calls upon the most basic principles of Scripture, as well as of human reason and dignity: truth, freedom, love. Unity's counterfeits lack all these ingredients. It is not the basic truth of Christ that is called for, but "being right" on a catalogue of opinions, theories, and dogmas (the party line). Freedom gives way to pressure and conformity, and one is held as suspect if he hears or reads anything that does not toe the party line. And there is little place for loving forbearance since the bonding element is a cold allegiance to what is called "sound doctrine."

The ultimate "cost" is to make whatever sacrifice is necessary to be "a man in Christ," to use Paul's language, rather than a sectarian. Jesus has already united all those who are in him in "the fellowship of the Spirit." And he has paid the price. —*the Editor*

> The starting point in considering the question of unity must always be regeneration and belief of the truth. Nothing else produces unity. —D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in *The Basis of Christian Unity*

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IS THE BIBLE THE INERRANT WORD OF GOD?

A creedal statement issued recently by the Evangelical Theological Society, a professional organization for "evangelical" scholars, led me to do some thinking about the nature of the Bible that I will pass along to you. I use quotation marks in identifying *evangelical* in this context, for there are many believers in the gospel of Christ, which is what the term means, that might not qualify as members of the ETS. The statement is this:

> "The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs."

Since many of our problems in the church stem from the way we view the Bible, we need to take a hard look at such claims as this one. We can do this more easily once we overcome the idea that the Bible itself is the object of our faith. The Bible in some sense may be "holy," but not like Christ is holy. It is always the Person of the Bible we worship, not the Bible itself. In like manner, the Bible may be referred to as the Word of God, but not in the same sense that Christ is "the Word of God," as per Rev. 19:3.

While the Bible speaks often of the Word of God, it is not certain that it ever refers to itself as the Word of God. Herein lies the problem with so many opinions about the Bible, including the one from the ETS: *claims are made for the Bible that the Bible does not claim for itself.* The Bible does not claim to be the Word of God. The Bible does not claim to be inerrant. There is no doctrine of "inspiration" as such in the Bible. In one place (2 Tim. 3:16) reference is made to the Scriptures being Godbreathed or inspired, and 2 Pet. 1:21 speaks of writers being "moved by the Holy Spirit," but as to what methodology is implied by this is a matter of opinion.

If we speak as the Bible speaks about itself, we will refer to the Bible as the Scriptures. Unless I have miscounted, there are 50 references to the Scriptures in the Bible, all of them of course in the New Testament since only the Old Testament was the Bible of Jesus and the early Christians. There are many other references in both Testaments to "it is written," which is a similar reference. But I do not believe you will find even one reference to the Old Testament (or the Scriptures) as "the Word of God."

Our Lord, for instance, always says such as "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life" (Jn. 5:39), and not "You search the word of God . . ." Again and again reference is made to "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled," not "that the word of God might be fulfilled." Rom. 15:4 refers to "the comfort of the Scriptures" and Acts 17:11 tells how some "searched the Scriptures daily," but the Bible does not use the term "the Word of God" in such ways.

Since Heb. 4:12 says that "the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword," it is supposed that this refers to the Bible. But that verse goes on to say that the Word of God judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart, which could hardly refer to the Bible. The next verse indicates that "the Word of God" is God himself or the power of God, for it reads: "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

Our preachers often point to Eph. 6:17 as an instance of the Bible being called the Word of God: “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,” but this is another case of ignoring the time element. The early Christians had no Bible to “take up” as we have. The “sword of the Spirit” is the piercing influence of the Guest of heaven who was with them, which demonstrates the power (or word) of God. This they could “take up” by appropriating it to their lives.

When one examines the Scriptures to ascertain the meaning of “the Word of God,” he finds that it involves far more than what is written, even though what is written might convey the Word of God. When the poet says “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:97), one cannot suppose he is talking about the Bible, including that very verse! The reference is to the will and mind of God, and even the majestic power of God, however that was communicated to the poet.

There is mystery to such language as “the word of the Lord came to Micah” and “the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord.” In the case of Jeremiah, the same Word that God put in the prophet’s mouth he “hastens to perform it” (Jer. 1:12). God’s Word is what he says and what he does; it seems also to be an experience, for the prophets sometimes “saw” the Word of God as well as heard it, as in Isa. 2:1. The prophets in turn spoke the Word, but it was more than mere words in that it was the power of God as well, as with Jeremiah whose words were like fire in his mouth (Jer. 5:14).

The Word of God is thus referred to in Scripture as abiding forever (l Pet. 1:25), upholding all things (Heb. 1:3), settled in heaven (Ps. 119:89), and the framer of the worlds (Heb. 11:3). It would be difficult to restrict these words to pen and ink: “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Ps. 33:6). That same creative Word, the mind and personality of God, was at work in the prophets and it is at work in the Scriptures. God speaks to us through the Scriptures, but that is not the same as to say the Bible is *per se* the Word of God, just as we cannot say that Jeremiah was the Word of God.

Not all that Jeremiah said and did was the Word of God, however frequently the Word used him. And so everything in the Bible is not the Word of God, such as: “Now the sons of Issachar were Tola, and Puah, Jashub, and Shimrom, four” (1 Chron. 7:1). That verse is of course Scripture and may have some slight historical value, but one would be hard put to say that God speaks to him through that passage. That is of course true with much of the

Bible, which makes it misleading to say, as do the "evangelicals," that the entire Bible is the Word of God. Such unnecessary deductions get us into trouble, obligating us to prove things about the Bible that cannot be proved.

This is why a defense can be made for what the Readers Digest sought to accomplish with its abridged Bible. It is possible that such an effort could capture most of what God is saying to us through the Bible even when substantially condensed. Those who object to that sort of thing are inconsistent, for we all have our "condensed version, "as it were, in that we have our favorite portions. We all know that a passage like "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33) means far more than "And the third day we cast out with our hands the tackling of the ship" (Acts 27:19). While both verses are Scripture, they are not both necessarily the Word of God to us.

I do not intend to say that part of the Bible is the Word of God and part is not. Strictly speaking, none of the Bible is the Word of God in that the Word (or mind) of God cannot be reduced to the written page. The Word of God is eternal, existing long before the Scriptures were ever written. I am rather saying that the Word of God is communicated to us through Scripture, just as through the prophets. As to how we come to realize the Word of God as revealed in Scripture is no simple matter. We might have the Bible memorized and yet not know the mind of God. One apostle assures us that Scripture is "spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14), while another one tells us that it is the anointing of the Holy Spirit that must teach us (1 Jn. 2:27). It helps if we keep the point of Scripture in mind, which is to conform us more and more to the likeness of God through Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). When Scripture is doing this, cultivating us in the likeness of Christ, we can believe that the Word of God is at work.

The ETS creedal statement says "The Bible alone . . . is the Word of God written." How do these theologians know that? One Scripture assures us that "the word of God is not bound" (2 Tim. 2:9), and since that was written before the church had anything like our modern Bible, it is not likely that the compilation of 66 books known as the "Holy Bible" has the Word of God bound. The Word of God might express itself in dreams, visions, poetry, art, philosophy, novels, or even in a note from a child to an adult. Since when is the Word of God bound to a book, any book, or even to the universe itself? Paul was comfortable with the idea that God spoke through Greek poets (Acts 17:28). And so he might speak to us through the likes of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, whether in a speech at

Harvard or in a novel. I am not saying God *does* but that he *might.* I am saying what the Scriptures say, that you cannot imprison the Word of God. God *might* speak to a man through his dog. Don't forget Balaam's ass!

If the ETS means that only the Bible constitutes the holy Scriptures, I would agree. It would also be true that however the Word of God might manifest itself (whatever idea we believe comes from God) it would not contradict what God has already revealed in Scripture.

As for the Bible being "inerrant," which appears to be as crucial a doctrine to the new "evangelicals" as to the old fundamentalists, the issue loses its urgency once it is conceded that we are talking about Scripture rather than the Word of God, and that the Bible is not to be viewed as if it were God himself. No one would object to referring to God as inerrant, but it is risky to suppose that *any* work of man could be perfect (or without any error at all), and that has to include the Bible since it is the writings of scores of men, even if "inspired" or "moved by the Spirit." whatever we make that mean.

But our brothers making up the ETS have an ingenius way of covering their tracks. Being the scholars they are, they know there are errors (even if insignificant ones) in the Bible, so they say "inerrant in the autographs." The autographs are the original writings, such as the actual manuscript prepared by John known to us as "the Gospel according to John." It is *that* manuscript that is inerrant, the ETS tells us, not your copy of John, which may be errant in some detail. Since our ETS brothers know that not a single autograph exists today, their affirmation of an inerrant Bible is wholly irrelevant if not foolish. The inerrant Bible to which they express creedal loyalty does not exist!

When scholars point to the jars and conflicts of the Bible, errors if you like, such as in the Easter story (had it "began to dawn" as Matthew says or was it "still dark" as John says when the women went to the tomb?), I am not at all bothered, for I look for the Word of God in the story, and all the witnesses agree that Jesus was raised from the dead. If anything, the contradictions in detail enhance the message, for they not only reveal the humanity of the witnesses but their integrity as well. They obviously didn't frame up on us!

If we will allow the Bible to be "the Scriptures," to use our Lord's language, and avoid creating a bibliolatry out of them, making necessary and foolish claims, claims that the Scriptures do not make, we will do the church a great service. If we persist in dogmatizing (and sometimes even pontificating) about the nature of the Bible, whether its "plenary

inspiration" or "verbal inerrancy" (weasel words?), we might weaken people's faith, for they may conclude that if these claims made for the Bible cannot be sustained then the whole Christian faith loses its credibility.

I am not saying that we should never refer to the Bible as the Word God, for I have shown that there is a sense in which we can. I am saying that we should have a responsible view of the Bible, and, yes, like our Lord and his apostles, speak more often the way they did. Like Paul did: "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15).

But I am also saying that it seems that the church continues to move alongside the Pharisees. "You search the scriptures," Jesus said to them, "because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness of me" (John 5:39). It was their inordinate concern for the mechanics of their Bible and their dogmas thereof that kept them from seeing Jesus. Unless we are careful we will lose Jesus in the very book we claim to venerate. —*the Editor*

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FIRST A WE, THEN SERVICE

Robert Meyers

The unknown author of Hebrews 12:28-29 writes: "The kingdom we are given is unshakable; let us therefore give thanks to God, and so worship him as he would be worshipped, with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire."

I have brooded much in recent years upon this imperative. As a boy I was taught to smile at Catholics and Presbyterians and any other religious folk who insisted upon solemnity and dignity in their worship. What they called reverence, we called pomp; what they thought of as awe, we termed affectation and vain strutting. We were as much in error on that point, I think now, as on some others.

I remember our chatty pulpit prayers —trite, mumbled, monotonous. They often made me think of the old player pianos with their rolls of music. Put in a dime, and out comes the expected tune. Call on one of our men to pray, I thought, and out comes all the predictable phrases. I'm afraid I sometimes could not help running just a few phrases ahead of them as they droned through the ritual, just to prove how well I knew our unwritten Prayer Book!

Our people sauntered casually into church, talking business deals or discussing plans for next week's party. The entire service often had a casual air; the posture of the participants was overly relaxed, sometimes even bored. And there were mundane intrusions everywhere. The ubiquitous clock from Smith's or Johnson's Funeral Home insisted that we be aware of time, although here was a place for timelessness if ever there was one. The figures on the wallboards told us about our contribution and our attendance, both practical matters but best put out of mind while we were in the very act of special attention to our God.

Reverence and awe? There was almost none. We were familiars of God, close friends on a plane of near-equality. Our furniture, our windows, our music, our sermons all contributed to a kind of grass-roots democracy of spirit.

Someone may object at this point, "But we are God's *family* … and we *ought* to be relaxed and casual." I agree that there is a time for relaxed, familial fellowship in our relationship with God and with each other. But I submit that it is probably not best accomplished in the meetinghouse. I believe that we should experience deep reverence and awe there, and find our relaxed fellowship in other phases of our Christian life.

If this is not an attractive thought, then I ask where it is that we are to "worship him as he would be worshiped, with reverence and awe"? Let every reader of these lines ask himself candidly about the degree to which he has fulfilled this imperative. How often have we felt the kind of awe suggested in Exodus 3:5 ("Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground")? How often have we shuddered with Peter, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord"? (Luke 5:8) Do we appreciate from our own religious experiences the comment which Goethe puts into the mouth of Faust: "The thrill of awe is man's best quality"?

Perhaps we need to be reminded oftener of the closing words of the passage from Hebrews. The writer insists on worshipping God with reverence and awe because "our God is a consuming fire." I doubt the writer means to speak of God's punitive anger. I think rather that he means God destroys transient and trivial things so that what is timeless may emerge in its full glory. Recognizing this, we put aside the transient and trivial so that He may have His way with us. When I recall the worship services of my boyhood, and when I put beside that memory the majestic concept of God expressed here, I shudder.

Religion, of course, has another aspect. I have intentionally stressed first the reverential and awe-full experience which should occur to us frequently. But I see this experience as a prelude to another, essential manifestation of the religious life: service to the helpless and fallen. “The kind of religion which is without stain or fault in the sight of God our Father is this: to go to the help of orphans and widows in their distress and keep oneself untarnished by the world.” James 1:27 is not, I think, occupied with the more formal aspects of worship at all. It is concerned with religion as it must be translated into all the hours of all our days. Just as God *must* be worshipped with reverence and awe, so *must* we pass from that experience to the practical, prosaic level of humanitarian service. Either one is defective without the other.

To worship God reverentially and cover your ears all week to the cries of the helpless is to insult him as Isaiah defined it in his great first chapter. Our solemnity, our awe, our reverence become the hollowest mockery if they issue in nothing more than an interior attitude. If we go inside to prostrate ourselves before him, we must go outside to express his love to all our fellows. Without this, the action is incomplete.

But those who would help the unfortunate without the aid of a reverent humbling of themselves before God will almost certainly find that they cannot adequately sustain the impulse to help. Our beneficiaries are not always grateful. They do not respond quickly enough. They betray us. We grow weary of helping them. Unless … unless we turn often to God in reverence and awe to replenish the very springs of our humanitarian impulses. After such an experience, we go out again emboldened to try yet once more.

First awe, then service. First the replenishing experience, high and holy and lifted up; then the exhausting and depleting giving of our energies in the name of the Father. This is the alternation which makes the religious life complete and workable. —*338 Fairway, Wichita 67212*

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The Amsterdam Convention . . . (1)

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

W. Carl Ketcherside

This is my account of the International Convention of Itinerant Evangelists, held in Amsterdam, last July. It lasted ten days and drew four thousand evangelists. There were another thousand persons who were trained to serve as stewards, and interpreters, and who

represented the press of the world. It was superbly organized and carried out without a visible hitch. Because I consider it to be of vital worth, this report will cover four installments. It will seek to evaluate the gathering upon the basis of its effect upon the contemporary religious scene.

The convention was divided into four parts, although not defined as such. These were motivational, instructional, practical and inspirational. They were translated into at least ten languages simultaneously. In some cases, an interpreter sat beside a man who spoke an isolated language and spoke softly to him. The first meeting consisted of a gathering of all attendants at 8:00 o'clock each morning. This was no small feat seeing that hundreds had never stayed in a hotel before and all had different sleeping and eating patterns. The meeting lasted for two hours. It featured eminent speakers and singers from all over the world. The second featured more than a hundred workshops by specialists in their fields. The third represented actual contact in evangelism with the Dutch people while the last brought in some of the great names in evangelism in our day.

Because I am profoundly interested in the signs of the times and in the history of current evenmts, I consider this gathering as the ninth in a series of phenomena indicating that the world is ripe for another reformation. Since the Amsterdam meeting ended I have seen the tenth event which betokens the approach of a tremendous new movement, which I have been pleased to call renewal through recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power. The Amsterdam meeting lent impetus to all three of these, and did so in a unique fashion. It was interesting because few, if any, of the speakers knew that he was being used as a revolutionary by Him who rules in the heavens. It is possible that if some had realized it they might have declined the honor.

Perhaps, of as much value as the more formal meetings, were the informal gatherings when there were no meetings in the Great Hall. It was here I found myself most at home, talking with a score or more of men from every nation under heaven. There were scores of questions, and since I represented no sectarian institution I was as free to learn as I was to share. I came to believe more fully than I had ever believed that whatever God wants done can be better done by one who is a Christian only than by anyone else. I cultivated the habit of listening to souls anxious to talk about multitudinous problems. It paid off and is still doing so in the many letters I am receiving from Namibia, Zambia, South Africa, India, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, and other remote places on our globe.

In this article I want to describe one of the many morning sessions and tell why it was significant. I have chosen the final day. It was addressed by two men — Michael Green and Cliff Barrows. Michael Green lives at Oxford, England. He graduated with a degree from Oxford, and two from Cambridge. He is an interesting speaker and has a disarming little laugh that sounds almost boyish. His theme was "The Evangelist and Spiritual Freshness of Life." He was made for it. Following his speech he led a tremendously informative and helpful workshop. In it he dealt with some of the ways in which he handles the atheistic and agnostic students which crowd the halls of Oxford. I had read every book of his for several years. I finished his latest "The Day Death Died" just before embarking for the convention. I found it a remarkable study of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Michael Green has four children, two sons and two daughters. One of them works in Watts, near Compton, California. He selected as the camping-ground for his talk 2 Corinthians 4. There are two gods mentioned here. The god of this world who blinded minds, and the God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness. He pointed out that there are five things which keep one from being spiritually fresh. 1. Repetition, proceeding from laziness. It is easier to snack on what's left than to go to the market for fresh fruit. He suggested changing the water on the bouquet. 2. Hypocrisy, which consists of pretending to be something one knows he is not. A wilted hypocrite is a wilted nothing.

3. Playing the prima donna. The seizing of the principal role and then playing it badly is one of the problems with preachers who are jealous or filled with rivalries. 4. Keeping up appearances. Men will sacrifice their families, friends, and even the church, for the plaudits of fawning sycophants. 5. Tampering with the gospel. Men who will not tamper with their car, the air conditioner, or any other piece of machinery, have no hesitation about tampering with the good news. It is frightening to wreck something so powerful.

To maintain freshness of life one must be tuned into life. Green suggested four kinds of life which keep one renewed. They are devotional, family, social and body life. He defined the latter as the body worshiping its head in mighty power. He pointed out that it is natural for an arm to receive nourishment, exercise and relaxation as a part of the body, and urged his hearers to stay with the body. One is like a ticket stub "Not good if detached."

A lovely young girl from Vietnam who had been blinded by shrapnel from an exploding bomb was led forward to the microphone where she sang a hymn which brought a burst of applause from the thousands in the auditorium. Then Cliff Barrows, who had directed the powerful singing in every session arose to speak on "The Evangelist and His

Family." He is the father of five children, with one son laboring in Nigeria. Paying a special tribute to Corrie ten Boom, he declared that he had been helped and inspired as much by this simple Dutch woman as by any person on earth.

He based his remarks on 1 Peter 3:7, stressing the phrases "heirs together", "the grace of life", and "your prayers be not hindered". He affirmed that more preachers were ruined by "playing around" and by "sexual infidelity" than by any other bait which the devil placed on the trigger of his trap, and declared there were four steps to infidelity casualness, callousness, carelessness, and compromise. He declared that momentary gratification of the flesh was too great a price to pay for loss of eternal life.

Such teaching had been going on each morning for nine days. Notebooks were becoming full. Heads were becoming fuller. The morning break in which a sandwich was shared with a cup of Dutch coffee so strong it hit you like a lightning bolt was a kind of welcome respite. I would like just to mention a few other morning speakers who were quite impressive. There was Alfredo C. Smith, who was head of the Buenos Aires Bible Institute and who founded the Lima Encounter With God Project in 1976. He disagreed with Billy Graham on the need for large organized efforts and opted instead for one-on-one encounter.

He was preceded by Gottfried Osei-Mensah, executive secretary for the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization. Formerly with the Nairobi Baptist Church, he quit his post to travel for the Pan African Fellowship of Evangelical Students. His theme was "The Evangelist's View of the Kingdom." The message was very informative and tremendously uplifting to all who heard it. Perhaps one of the most stirring messages was given by E. V. Hill, of the Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Watts, California. It really turned the hearers on. Mr. Hill is a black preacher and he knows the art of building to a climax. He certainly did so in an address which will long be remembered by those who heard it. The morning sessions of the convention were all worthwhile. I wish you might have heard them. *—139 Signal Hill Dr., St. Louis 63121*

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BOOK NOTES

The Topical Chain Study Bible features four themes (grace, judgment, holiness, sin) in four shaded colors throughout the 66 books, beautifully done, with many other study helps, including a concordance. It is the New American Version. It makes a unique gift for any Bible student. 29.95 postpaid.

Because of a special purchase we can offer our readers the elegant revised edition of *Daily Bible Study* by William Barclay, an 18-vol. commentary on the NT at 20% discount. Usually 99.95 for the set, our price is 83.00 including postage. This set provides a lifetime of serious but delightful study, for the entire NT is divided into short readings (with Barclay's own translation) with attractive headings and revealing comments. We are willing to offer this as a money-back guarantee to our readers, and you can pay for it in three installments if need be.

While I have studied the Barclay *Daily Bible Study* for years, using it for family worship, I am now reading with great profit the companion set on the OT, which Barclay was scheduled to edit. Due to his untimely death, the project is the labor of John L. Gibson of the University of Edinburgh. The entire OT will eventually be covered, but you, like I, can begin with the volumes now available, which are eleven: Genesis (2 vols.), Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, 1 & 2 Samuel, Psalms (2 vols.), Ezekiel, Daniel, Jeremiah. Following Barclay's format and style, the OT really comes alive. Highly recommended. 6.95 per volume, postpaid. Why not try one of them, and if you are pleased as I am positive you will be, you can order others, one at a time if you like.

The *International Children's Bible* is hailed by Dr. James Dobson, the man who has all the answers on raising children, as "A Bible children can read and understand," and Dr. Bruce Metzger of Princeton says that even though it is third-grade level English it does not compromise scholarship. Some of our readers are so delightfully surprised with the quality of this NT version for children that they have ordered additional copies, one enthusiast insisting that it is also ideal for adults. 12.95 postpaid.

In our last issue we told you of a printed exchange between Buff Scott, Jr. and a Church of Christ minister on whether the Church of Christ is a counterfeit, and advised you to write Buff if interested. Now Bill Jackson, 8900 Manchaca Rd., Austin, Tx. 78748, who is the other minister involved, says there are things he wrote that Buff did not include but was supposed to, and if you will send him a stamped envelope he will send it to you.

Francis Schaeffer's newest book, *The Great Evangelical Disaster,* lays bare the sin of evangelicals: not speaking out as they ought. So he speaks out, calling for evangelicals to be radicals for truth. This book reproduces his tract "The Mark of the Christian," which is an impressive piece of work, and he cites names and issues as he attacks the sin of "accommodation to modernity" that will interest you. 7.95 postpaid.

K. C. Moser, the Church of Christ "liberal" in a day when we had very few who could be so labeled, wrote *The Way of Salvation* and *The Gist of Romans*, the latter in 1957. Still available at 5.95 each postpaid, they will surprise you as coming out of the Church of Christ of a generation ago, and of course still very relevant.

Ouida sold a copy of my *The Stone-Campbell Movement* to her dear cousin for 21.95 (no discount!), who wrote back that she was reading it into the night. "It is like eating peanuts," she wrote, "You can't stop once you start." We believe you will find it that interesting, and while we cannot discount the price we will pay the postage if you send your check with your order. Or if you will get up a list of eight subs to this journal at 3.00 each for the year (24.00) we will send you a copy of the history book free of charge.

We have bound volumes dating back to 1977. The 1977 volume, entitled *Unity and Fellowship* and the 1978 volume, entitled *The Ancient Order,* are 5.50 each. The two double volumes (two years in one) for 1979-80 and 1981-82 are 8.50 each. You will note that these prices are only slightly higher that the subscription rate, and yet they are beautifully hard-bound volumes with dust jackets.

If you would like a sampling of what we have said in years past, we will send you 18 back copies, selected at random, that may date back 20 years, for only 3.00.

You can help us publish abroad the liberating principles of this journal by sending it to those whom you believe to have open minds and hearts. The cost is hardly an issue when you can send it to four people (we do the mailing) for only 12.00 a year, or you can send as many names as you like at only 3.00 per name. Some of our most grateful readers discover the paper in this manner.

Our series of lead articles now run two years, the present series being *The Doe of the Dawn*, which will end at the close of 1984. The previous series (1981-82) was *Jesus Today.* We have this in a single bound volume, beautifully crafted with dust jacket, at only 8.50 postpaid. It includes all of the journal for those two years.

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

Over the past several years eight congregations in Yorkville have been working together to provide food for the destitute poor as the "Yorkville Common Pantry." Two of the churches are Roman Catholic, two are Episcopalians, and one each of the Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Disciples. We had get-togethers at each of the churches in order to get better acquainted and to share new insights on how we can become better witnesses for the unity of the church. At one gathering we heard an Anglican Franciscan friar who pointed out that we cannot work across denominational lines and do anything significant about the divided state of the church until we learn to love one another on an individual basis. Furthermore, he said, we can't love one another unless we know one another, and there is no way to know one another if we do not meet one another. It is therefore evident that those Christians who are concerned for the unity of the church are obliged to find ways of meeting, knowing, and loving across denominational lines. — *Comer Shacklell, Westfield, NJ*

(We must all humbly bow penitently to the friar's logic. Many of us have been blatantly inconsistent in claiming to be a unity people while at the same time practicing an exclusivism that keeps us separated from other Christians. —*Ed.)*

Arnold Hardin of Dallas tells in his church bulletin of attending the ACU lectureship this year and finding it to be largely a gathering of old people, with comparatively few young couples. It was another sign to him that "We are losing or have lost a generation of young people." But it could mean that the new generation is not as much lost to us as to the ACU lectures, which have a reputation of being notoriously safe.

The Feb. 28 issue of *Time* tells of how a member of the Collinsville (Ok.) Church of Christ is suing the elders for over a million dollars over an invasion of her privacy, along with "a willful intention to inflict emotional distress." When the elders sent her a scarlet letter, incriminating her as an adulteress and threatening public exposure, she did everything except to get on her knees before them, she says, to dissuade them from taking such action. When they eventually exposed her to the congregation, urging the people to have no more to do with her and making it a public issue, she decided to take legal action. She told the press that it upset her that "these men think they have the authority to mess with someone's life like that." Assuming that our sister, a 36-year old divorcee with four children, was guilty as charged, it is questionable that any good is done by sending a scarlet letter. Would not the loving approach of Scripture be more appropriate: "If anyone is overtaken in a trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness" (Gal. 6:1). Threatening letters are the work of tax offices and police stations, not the fruit of a shepherd's heart. One wonders if such action would have been taken if the transgressor had been one of the elders or a wealthy business man. One thing is sure, the accused, who is a nurse, is no Hester Prynne of *The Scarlett Letter* fame, who stoically

bore her public chastisement, as *Time* notes, and she may eventually teach our elders more than they ever supposed they could learn from a woman. Already the court has ruled that it is not a matter to be left to the church, as requested by the elders' attorney.

The above news item has received extensive coverage, appearing in *Newsweek* as well as *Time,* newspapers across the country, including the *New York Times,* and also national TV coverage. The trial has since been conducted and the jury ruled in the woman's favor, allowing her $390,000 in damages. If we were an introspective people, this could be an occasion of deep soul-searching, especially on the part of our leadership, as to why we as a people have such a bad press, *generally,* not only in this particular instance. But more often than not we turn our heads the other way and avoid the painful discipline of self-scrutiny.

One of our readers who is impressed with the way the Church of Christ world ,is changing sent me a tape recording of Rubel Shelly's address at the last Pepperdine lectureship, which was a study on who is a false teacher. Rubel stated that one can be "in error," like Apollos, and not be a false teacher. Defining the false teacher as one who is rebellious against God and concerned for dishonest gain, he told the Pepperdine audience that our people have been "too quick to shoot from the hip" in branding folk. While all truth is important, some truths are more important, and it is a denial of the crucial truths that makes one an enemy of the faith, he avowed. We have erred in the past as a people, he insisted, by dividing over things of "lesser weight." While nobel efforts as this one usually lack in concrete illustrations as to what is meant (such as making false teachers of those who are premillennial or who use an organ), we nonetheless rejoice and are confident that in time such heroes will be saying, "for example, this is what I mean."

Nan Dean, 2032 Sage Trail, Hurst, TX. 76053, phone 817-498-0170, is an encouraging example of the progress being made in the ministry of women among our people. A teacher of the grace of God, she presents a series of studies that women's groups find both informative and liberating. Already she has been invited to several Churches of Christ and Christian Churches in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, but she is free to make occasional visits farther from home. Ouida and I have listened to her tapes (and we know her personally) and find her presentations to be exciting, always biblical and reasonable but never judgmental.

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READER'S EXCHANGE

We are having good turnouts in our area ministers' meetings with Christian Churches and Churches of Christ. They recently honored me as the one in this area who has done so much to help break down walls and build fellowship and love. That was encouraging. —*Darrell Bolin, Lock Haven, Pa.*

One neighbor, well known to us and with whom I have had discussions, threw himself to the crocodiles in the river near our house. The reason was that the witchdoctor had fingered and blamed him for his son drowning in a swimming pool accident while the neighbor was at work. The power of witchcraft is real in Zambia and the Gospel of Christ is the answer. —*Chester Woodhall, Kitwe, Zambia.*

You can never know what your journal means to so many people. Many students come to me with comments about how much they appreciate the articles. —*Stan McDaniel, Johnson Bible College, Knoxville, Tn.*

My great grandfather, David Chenault, was a strong Calvinist who disagreed with Campbell. My grandfather, David Chenault, Jr., was baptized by Campbell and was disinherited by his father. On my mother's side Capt. Billy Bush, my great grandfather, built the first protestant church to be erected west of the Appalachians, the Old Stone Meeting House near Winchester, Ky., which is still in use. One member of this family, E. T. Bush, took a diploma at Bethany but was not converted to the Christian Church until years later. He died an elder in the church in Bowling Green, Ky. in 1900. —*Grace C. Dittert, El Campo, Tx.*

Leroy Garrett was there (unity conference, Conway, Ar.) and I really enjoyed getting to know him. The brethren who don't like him had told us he was really a bad egg, but everything I found him working for here was in line with what the Bible says God wants. The same brethren have also labeled me with some very ugly adjectives, because I accept Bible authority and reject theirs. By the way, if you haven't read the book, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, by Leroy Garrett, make it No. 1 priority to do so right away. —*Olan Hicks in News and Notes (Searcy, Arkansas).*

I have a lot of back issues of *Restoration Review* and *Bible Talk* that I would give to someone. I intend to keep the earliest issues of *Bible Talk. - Doy Rhoton, 1357 E. Sherman, Paris, Tx. 75460*

(Bible Talk preceded this journal and was published from 1952 to 1958. - *Ed.)*

As a satirist, I am inclined to re-write Acts 2:38 so as to exclude the divorced from the forgiveness of sins. A Church of Christ preacher in Florida refuses to baptize any divorced person. That is terrible! —*Lee Keesling, Arlington, Va.*

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Address all mail to: 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, TX 76201*

RESTORATION REVIEW is published monthly, except July and August, at 1201 Windsor Drive, Denton, Texas. Second class postage paid at Denton, Texas. SUBSCRIPTION RATES: $5.00 a year, or two years for $8.00; in clubs of four or more (mailed by us to separate addresses) $3.00 per name per year. (USPS 044450). POSTMASTER: Send address changes to RESTORATION REVIEW, *1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas 76201.